contemplated the extinction of the Hohenzollern power, and the partition among his vassal states of that dynasty's variously acquired and strangely assorted lands, which had so little territorial unity that they extended in two separate parallel lines from northeast to southwest. Voltaire said they stretched over Europe like a pair of garters. The best offer that could be wrung from Napoleon — and, in view of Prussia's absolute prostration, he thought his proposition not ungenerous — was for an armistice, during which the French should occupy all Prussia as far as the Bug; and Frederick William should order the now advancing Russians ofi his soil. The Prussian minister actually signed this paper, but his sovereign, whose hopes were rising in proportion as the Russian army drew nearer, refused to ratify it. Owing to the general readjustment of the international relations so rudely shattered by the rise of French empire, neither Great Britain nor Russia could settle upon a definite policy, much less Prussia, distracted alike by internal dissensions and the smiting of ruthless foes.

It is not difficult to conceive the desperation of Frederick William as he learned the ominous disposition made of the lands belonging to his allies. The Elector of Hesse-Cassel had remained ostensibly neutral in the war, having requested and been refused membership in the Rhine Confederation. But he had mustered about twenty thousand men on a war footing: his heir was in the Prussian lines. He was rightly suspected of trimming to both currents: his people loathed and despised him. The day after Jena he was informed that the Emperor had been aware of his secret sympathy with the coalition, and that his feelings had been evidenced by the permission granted the Prussian troops to pass through his domain while his QW& army was